Weavers strike in Gujarat

1151. SHRI JIBON ROY:
DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD:

Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the weavers in Gujarat are on continuous strike since 21st December, 2001 and staging hunger strike before the house of Union Textiles Minister demanding withdrawal of electricity tariff and other relief; and

(b) how Government is going to protect the traditional industry and the weavers against the offensive of globalised market regime?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI V. DHANANJAY KUMAR): (a) The powerloom weavers in Gujarat went on strike on January 3, 2002 till Jan. 27, 2002 after the award of the Gujarat Electricity Regulatory Commission (GERC) to charge power tariffs from the powerloom sector on par with other industries.

(b) Government has taken several initiatives to facilities growth of the decentralised powerloom industry to become competitive and face the global challenge. Some of these include:

(i) A programme for induction of 50,000 shuttleless and for 2.50 lakh semi-automatic and automatic looms in the decentralised powerloom sector has been announced. Incentives are available under the Technology Upgradation Fund Scheme where the powerloom owner can either avail 12% upfront Capital Linked Subsidy or reduce cost of borrowing the capital by interest reimbursement of 5%.

(ii) Powerloom Service Centres (PSCs) have been established to provide services, such as designs, training, skill upgradation and the testing facilities to the powerloom weavers. The powerlooms at the PSCs have been upgraded so that powerloom weavers can get trained to operate modern looms;

(iii) Computer Aided Design Centres in Powerloom Service Centres have been established to provide value addition through design inputs into powerloom production.

(iv) Powerloom Export Entitlement (PEE) quota has been

provided to encourage powerloom exports. In the new quota policy for 2000—2004, the PEE quota has been raised from 10% to 15%.

Mitigating the hardship of powerloom owners and weavers

1152. SHRI AIMADUDDIN AHMED KHAN (DURRU):
SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM:

Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received representation from the Textiles Manufacturers Association regarding the state of severe indebtedness of the powerloom weavers and owners, and the pressure tactics adopted by the cooperative and other banks to realize the debt instead of proceeding through cooperative courts;

(b) if so, whether in view of acute recession both in the domestic and the world market the weavers and owners are driven to commit suicides under pressure from the banks and what were the demands of the associations; and

(c) Government's response to help to mitigate the hardship of the powerloom owners and the weavers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI V. DHANANJAY KUMAR): (a) and (b) Representations from the Textiles Manufacturers Associations and powerloom weavers and unit holders are being received from time to time highlighting their various problems, which include indebtedness of weavers; obsolete technology of looms, leading to low quality and low productivities; difficulties in accessing credit; fluctuating prices of yarn, etc. These difficulties have been accentuated by the recessionary trends in the economy.

(c) Government has taken several initiatives to tackle these issues and facilitate growth of the decentralised powerloom industry to become competitive and face the global challenge. Some of these include:

(i) A programme for induction of 50,000 shuttleless and for 2.50 lakh semi automatic and automatic looms in the decentralised powerloom sector has been announced. Incentives are available